

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 11516

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNHCR
SUBJECT: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REF: A. GENEVA 11304; B. STATE 181373; C. GENEVA 10996

1. NOW THAT THE RESOLUTION TO INCREASE THE UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY UP TO NINE MEMBERS HAS PASSED ECOSOC, AND IS MOST LIKELY OF ADOPTION IN UNGA THIS FALL, WE SHOULD, I FEEL, TURN OUR THOUGHTS WITHOUT DELAY TO CONSIDERING MEANS BY WHICH WE CAN SHAPE THIS DEVELOPMENT TO OUR BEST ADVANTAGE. BY THIS I MEAN, OF COURSE, THAT WE START NOW TO LAY PLANS TO CONTAIN THE INCREASE TO THE SIZE WE DESIRE, AND TO DO OUR UTMOST TO ASSURE SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS WHO WILL CONTRIBUTE IN A POSITIVE MANNER TO THE ORGANIZATION.

2. WE ALREADY HAVE THE FEEL OF SEVERAL INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS CONCERNING THESE MATTERS AS A RESULT OF OUR EARLIER DISCUSSIONS. IT WILL BE NECESSARY IN THE COMING WEEKS TO ENTER MORE ACTIVELY INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TO ACHIEVE THE ENDS WE SEEK. WE HAVE FOUND, FOR INSTANCE, CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT NO MEMBER HAS, AS YET, EVIDENCED AN INTEREST IN UTILIZING IMMEDIATELY ALL NINE PLACES AUTHORIZED BY THE RESOLUTION. WE NOTED IN THE FRENCH INTERVENTION THEIR OBJECTION TO ANY INORDINATE INCREASE, AND, IN FACT, THEIR PREFERENCE THAT THE INCREASE BE RESTRICTED TO FIVE. THE BRITISH HAVE TOLD US THEIR FEELING THAT THIS ASPIRATION IS SOMEWHAT UNREALISTIC IF WE ARE TO HAVE PLACED ON

THE REVISED EXCOMM MEMBERS OF OUR CHOOSING. DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER DE HAAN HAS TOLD US ALSO THAT, WHILE NO ONE WISHES TO FILL ALL NINE PLACES, NEITHER DO MOST FEEL THAT IT CAN BE RESTRICTED TO FIVE. RATHER, HE BELIEVES THAT ABOUT SEVEN NEW MEMBERS WILL BE NECESSARY TO SATISFY ALL DESIRES.

3. AS FOR NEW MEMBERS, VARIOUS COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN MENTIONED. MOST FREQUENTLY HEARD IS JAPAN, WHICH WE CONSIDER AN EXCELLENT CANDIDATE, HEAVILY SUPPORTED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM. UK REPS HERE HAVE ALSO EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR MALAYSIA AND POSSIBLY NEW ZEALAND. ON THE OTHER HAND, THAILAND IS AN OBVIOUSLY LOGICAL CHOICE FROM THAT AREA. FINLAND HAS BEEN SUGGESTED FROM THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, ALTHOUGH WE NOTE THAT THE THREE OTHER NORDIC COUNTRIES ARE ALREADY REPRESENTED ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. DE HAAN HAS TOLD US THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF SAUDI ARABIA IS ALSO BEING BRUIED ABOUT, AND WE SEE POSITIVE FACTORS IN THIS PROSPECT BOTH FROM THE DONOR ANGLE AND FROM CONSTRUCTIVE AND ACCEPTABLE ARAB REPRESENTATION. DE HAAN HAS ALSO RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CANDIDACY OF AN EASTERN STATE, PROBABLY ROMANIA, WHERE UNHCR PROPOSES TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE IN THE FUTURE. (ON THE OTHER HAND, DE HAAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THUS FAR UNHCR HAS BEEN UNDER NO PRESSURE FROM THE EASTERN BLOC FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE EXCOMM). RESUMABLY, INCREASED AFRICAN REPRESENTATION OF TWO, CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBLY THREE, MORE SEATS WILL BE RESOLVED WITHIN THE AFRICAN CAUCUS ITSELF.

4. WHETHER THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WOULD REMAIN SATISFIED WITH THEIR CURRENT REPRESENTATION OF THREE ON THE EXCOMM IS, OF COURSE, HIGHLY DEBATABLE, AND PROVISION MIGHT HAVE TO BE MADE FOR AN INCREASE IN THEIR NUMBERS. IN THIS REGARD, IT DOES SEEM TO US THAT THERE IS AN IMBALANCE IN THE AFRICAN REPRESENTATION OF SIX (FOUR BLACK AFRICAN AND TWO NORTH AFRICAN) AS OPPOSED TO THE THREE LATIN MEMBERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE REFUGEE SITUATION IS NUMERICALLY, AND POTENTIALLY, FAR MORE OMINOUS IN AFRICA THAN IT IS IN LATIN AMERICA. THIS CONSIDERATION RAISES, IN TURN, THE BASIC QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE CONCERNING CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, I.E., SHOULD "STATES WITH A DEMONSTRATED INTEREST IN, AND DEVOTION TO, THE SOLUTION OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM" BE CONSTRUED TO MEAN THOSE WITH POTENTIAL DONOR CAPABILITY, OR THOSE AFFLICTED WITH THE PROBLEM, OR A BLEND OF BOTH.

5. THE MISSION WILL BE MAKING DISCREET PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS OF OTHER MEMBERS ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE RELATIVELY

QUIET SUMMER WEEKS AHEAD. WE WILL BE REPORTING OUR FINDINGS
IN THIS REGARD AND WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S
THINKING AND OBJECTIVES IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT DISCUSS AND
CONSOLIDATE POSITIONS WITH OTHER INTERESTED MEMBERSHIP
EARLY IN THE FALL.
VANDEN HEUVEL

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